



*City of Falls Church
Draft Comprehensive Plan*

*City Council Update
February 22, 2005*



Public Review Process

- ★ The **Planning Commission** held **5 public hearings** on the draft between November, 2004 and January, 2005 and **recommended that the plan be approved by the City Council** (action taken at January 18, 2005 meeting)
- ★ First of 2 meetings sponsored by Planning Division and **LOWV** to provide information and have interactive discussion took place on February 4th and the second takes place tomorrow February 23rd at 7:30 in Community Center.



Public Relations

- ★ Hard copies of draft Plan available for review in the **Planning Division and at the Library.**
- ★ Electronic version of Plan is available on the City's **website** along with staff reports and powerpoint presentations. See www.ci.falls-church.va.us
- ★ **Articles** will continue to be published in *News Press* to advertise public hearings and describe plan amendment process.
- ★ **Land owners** affected by future land use map amendments have and will received **letters** notifying them of the City Council public hearing process.



Presentation

- ★ Overview of each of the chapters with **summary**, description of **significant changes**, and **policy issues**.
- ★ Maps of all **proposed changes to the Future Land Use Plan Map**



Final Plan Product



★ Primarily **electronic web-based document** with links between various sections and graphics.



★ **GIS based interactive mapping services** for different topic areas.



★ **Limited printed copies** of text with some graphics and static maps.



Demographics--Summary

- ★ Describes **current and future demographics** in City.
- ★ **No substantive changes** to chapter.
- ★ This chapter **does not contain goals and strategies.**



Community Character, Appearance, and Design Chapter-- Summary



- ★ Much of the intent of 1997 Plan has been met regarding the creation of a “Community Appearance Plan” with adoption of City’s **Design Guidelines**.



- ★ Create corridors that are **convenient for pedestrians and cyclists** to travel through with **vibrant and interesting commercial areas** and attractive public spaces.



- ★ **Reform commercial areas** currently occupied by **strip retail** development into **larger structures** with **ground floor retail, interesting, human-scaled facades, fewer curb cuts** for automobiles, and bounded by a **continuous streetscape element**.



Summary

- ★ Beautify and define the **gateways** to the City.
- ★ Provide both **physical and visual linkage** between various sections of the City through the use of trails and congruous building form.





Proposed Revisions

- ★ Previously Plan just stated redevelopment in Village section should be **compatible with surrounding uses**. This was not very clear direction and now these uses have changed with the Broadway, Byron, and Spectrum projects.
- ★ **Character of Village section** redefined somewhat to be a “**medium-density** area with **shops, restaurants, and other retail** and commercial uses that are **clustered together** with very small front setbacks, parking in the rear and sides of buildings, and attractive front and sideyard landscaping.”



Proposed Revisions

- ★ Concept of the proposed **City Center** is introduced in both Community Character and Land Use Chapters.
- ★ It states that “the City Center must be **vibrant** and be designed to meet many of the residents **everyday needs** for **shopping, services, dining, recreation, cultural activities**, and possibly civic needs such as those served by the post office...”
- ★ The text further describes preliminary plans for the City Center area. This language will be updated as plans for the area are better defined and might include changing boundary, including guiding principles, and a graphic concept plan.



Proposed Revisions

- ★ **Infill residential development** addressed in chapter. (See text on p. 17 and strategies 1-B and 1-C)
 - Encourages property owners to utilize the City's Design Guidelines and "Promote infill residential development that will enhance the City's tax base and improve the existing housing stock, while being compatible with existing neighborhoods and creating as few environmental impacts as possible."



Proposed Revisions

- ★ Strategy 2-C recommends the **undergrounding of utilities** in the commercial corridors.
- ★ Strategy 2-I recommends **improving pedestrian movements across W. Broad St.**
- ★ Chapter also includes a significant **community participation element** and promotes a greater level of use and implementation of the Comprehensive Plan throughout the community and its activities.



Revisions Continued

- ★ Includes more general language about **creating a mixture of uses** and less specific language about **creating residential uses** in the commercial corridors. Strategy in **Goal 3 within the 1997 Plan** to encourage new residential development without displacing existing commercial space along Broad and Washington Streets has been **removed** from the Plan for this reason.
- ★ Strategy 4-B recommends including retail uses on the first floor of structures in the commercial corridors and office and/or residential uses on the upper floors.



Land Use and Economic Development --Summary

- ★ The Plan discusses the need to promote more **efficient land use** with **higher density redevelopment** in the **commercial corridors** (especially in **City Center** and **Gordon Road Triangle**) that will blend with and **enhance the City's character**, **protect existing residential neighborhoods**, provide **economic stability**, create an environment where the **automobile is needed less**, and maintain **environmental integrity**.





Summary Continued

- ★ Recommendations to create **more diverse housing and employment opportunities** in the City.
- ★ A **balanced mixture of uses** is also recommended in a variety of areas.
- ★ 2.2 square miles should be **connected** and made **walkable** through a network of **trails** and **greenways**.





Proposed Text Revisions

- ★ Includes information about the proposed City Center described in terms of **land use focus** and as **economic development initiative**.
- ★ City Center to meet many of the **civic, entertainment, and shopping needs** of the community within the City as opposed to in other locations where residents most often drive.
- ★ Provide **convenient access for all modes of transportation** and from different sections and activity centers within the City **to the City Center**.



Proposed Revisions

- ★ Goal 1- B revised strategy to **encourage redevelopment** that **enhances** the City's **character**, while providing **economic stability** and **environmental quality**.
- ★ Goal 4 -new strategies related to **creation of efficient parking requirements**.
- ★ Goal 6-two new strategies regarding efforts with property owners to **improve water quality**.



Revisions Continued

- ★ Goal 9 -Adequate **level of commercial services** within the City **to meet resident needs**, while providing **economic vitality**.
- ★ Several new strategies added to stress need to
 - expand commercial uses and meet needs **thereby lessening resident automobile trips**;
 - preserve commercial uses on commercially zoned land, especially within creative mixed-use projects.**
 - create as much new sustainable commercial space** within the City to increase it commercial tax base for long-term economic viability.



Revisions Continued

- ★ Goal 10- two new strategies related to **inventorying target redevelopment properties**, offering aid in the **consolidation of smaller lots**, and using **public fiscal and non-fiscal incentives** to stimulate redevelopment of underutilized properties.





Revisions Continued

- ★ Goal 12 -Anticipate and **plan** for **future parking needs** related to the proposed redevelopment. Includes a new strategy to consider **on-street parking** in some commercial corridor areas.
- ★ Goal 13- Two new strategies to create a City Center with a balance of uses that can meet commercial, cultural, entertainment needs of residents and employees and a multi-modal access plan for getting there.
- ★ Goal 15- new strategy to work with existing businesses on **relocation** as a result of the **displacement** due to redevelopment.



Revisions Continued

- ★ Strategy 16-B-Maintain a mixture of **national chain and small independent businesses**.
- ★ Strategy 2-A of the 1997 Plan was **removed**. Stated “**Do not expand commercial zoning into residential neighborhoods**”, because City may consider some minor expansion of commercial or mixed-use zoning in the future to make the **depth of the commercial zoning** in its primary corridors **more functional**. **Other goals and strategies in the new draft plan designed to protect residential neighborhoods** from the impacts of commercial and other higher density developments.



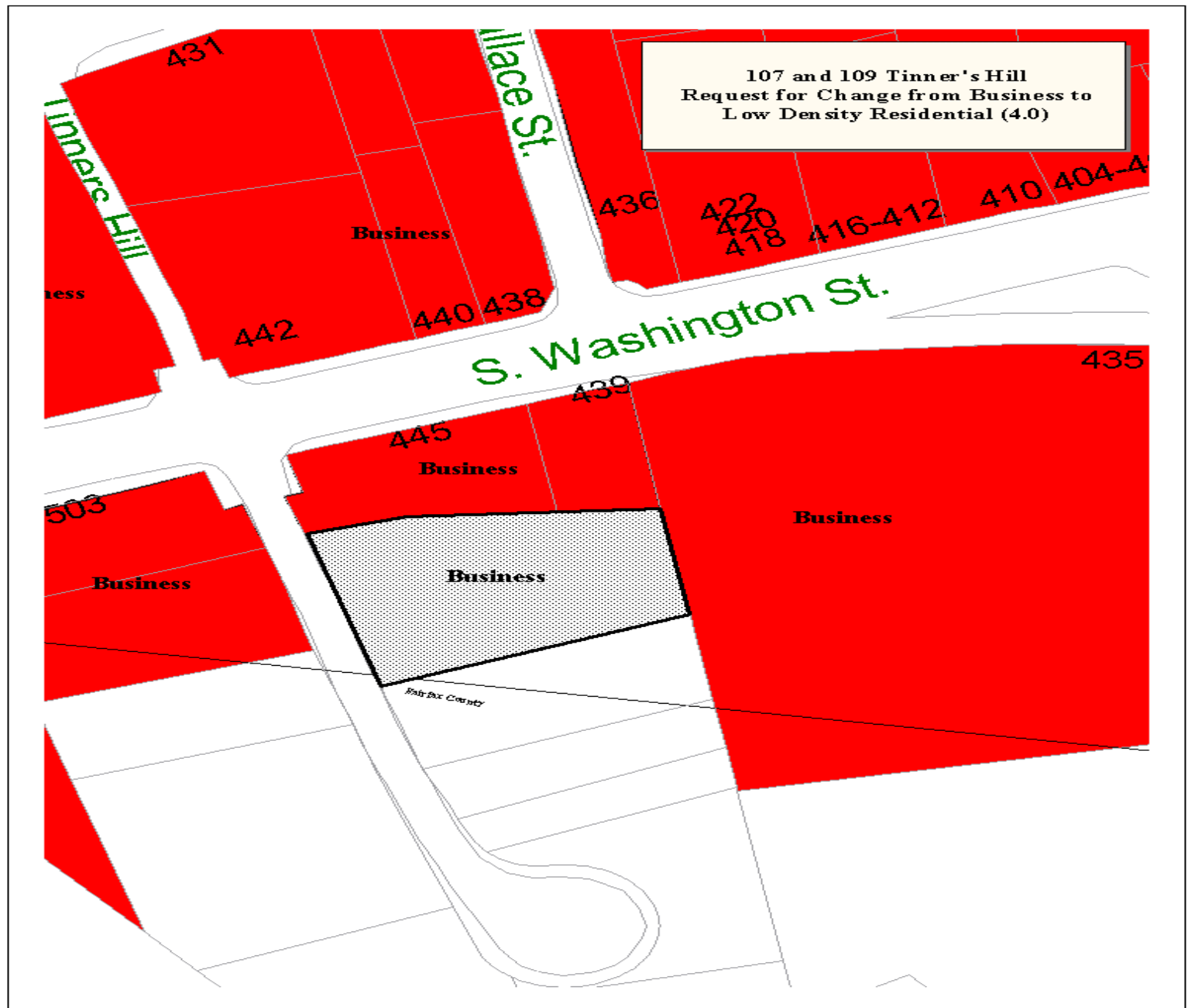
Revisions Continued

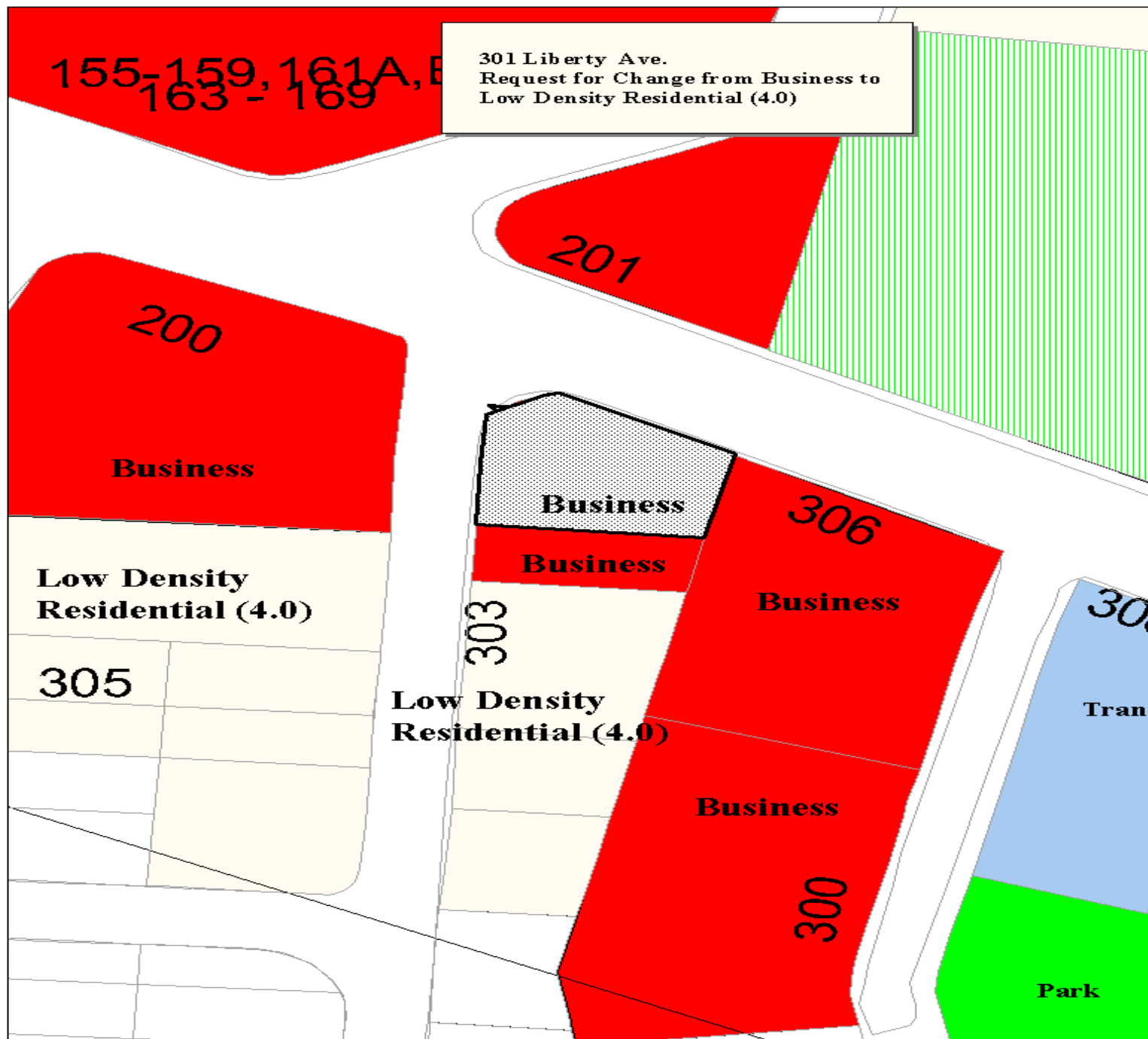
- ★ Strategy 3-A of the 1997 Plan has been **removed**. It stated “Encourage the **integration of housing into commercial zones** without the loss of street level commercial development”.

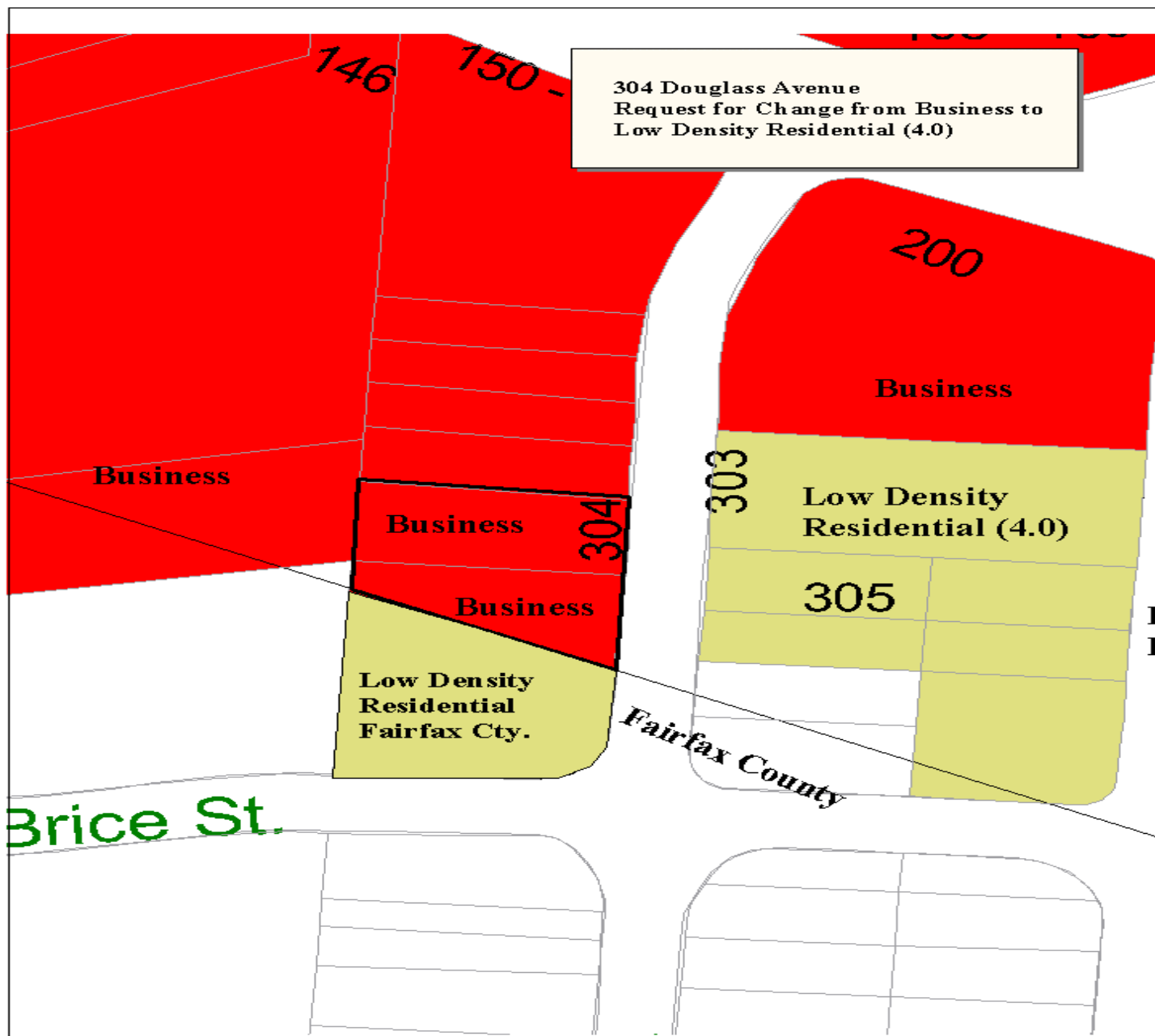


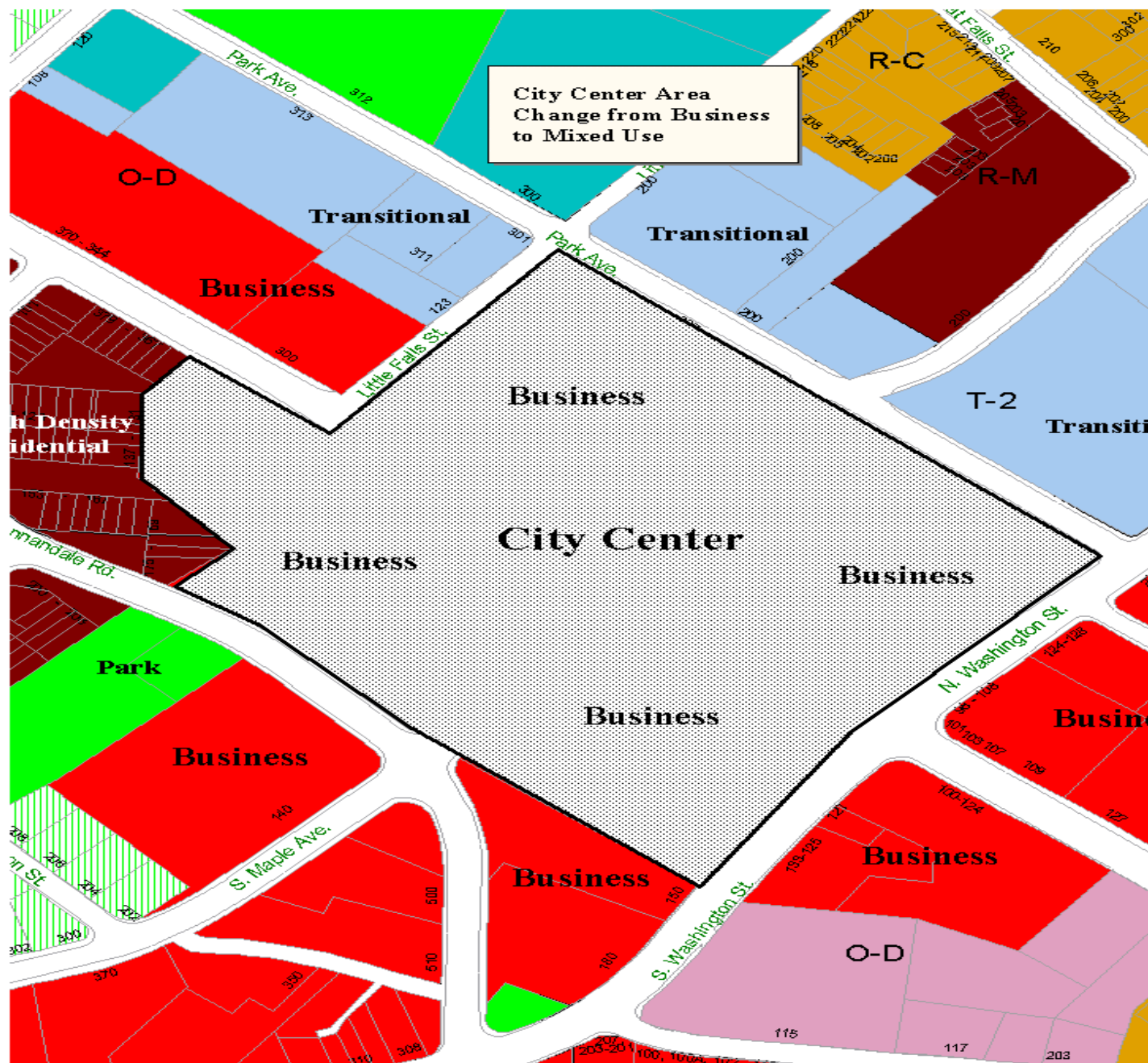


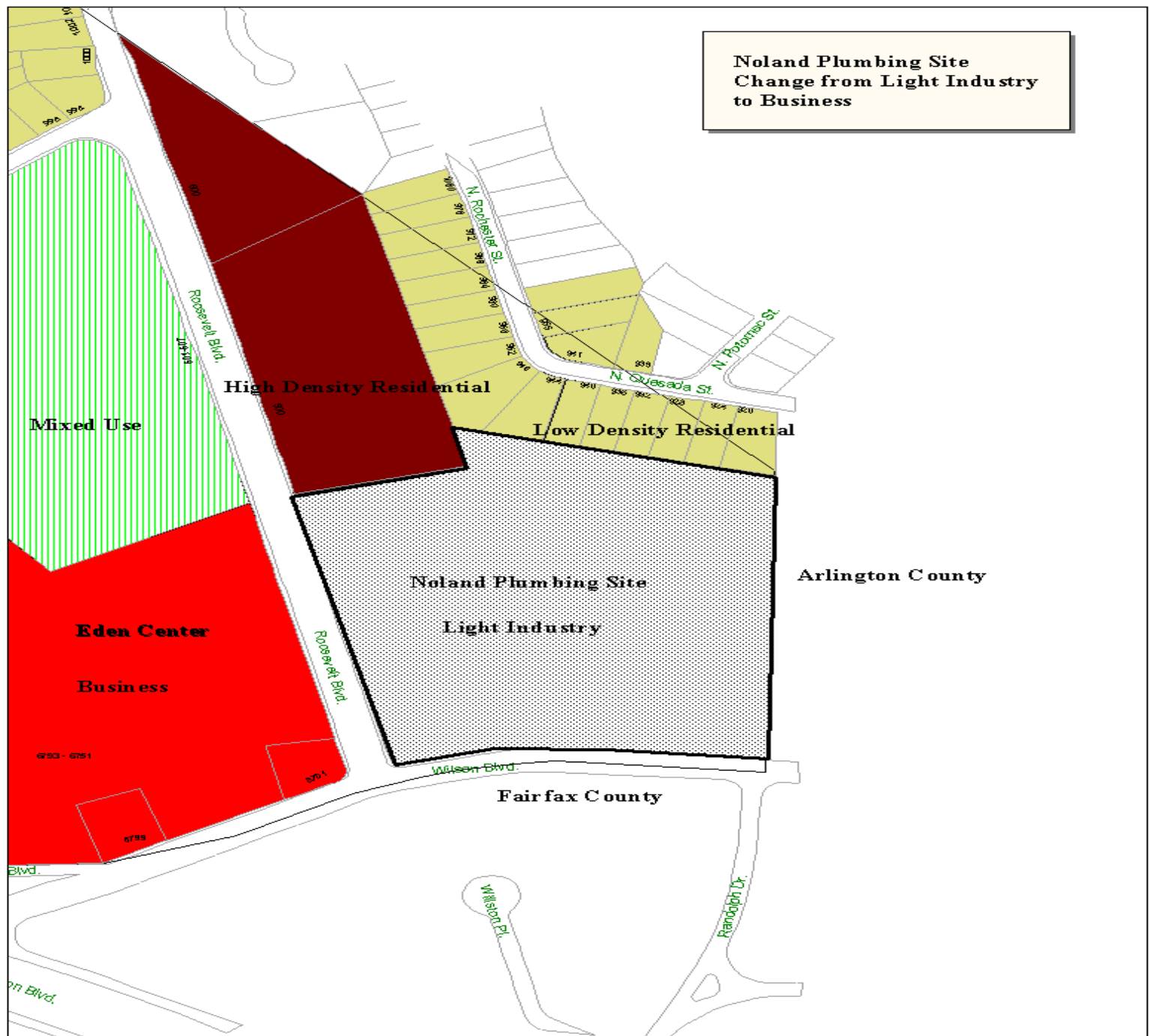
Proposed Revisions to Future Land Use Map

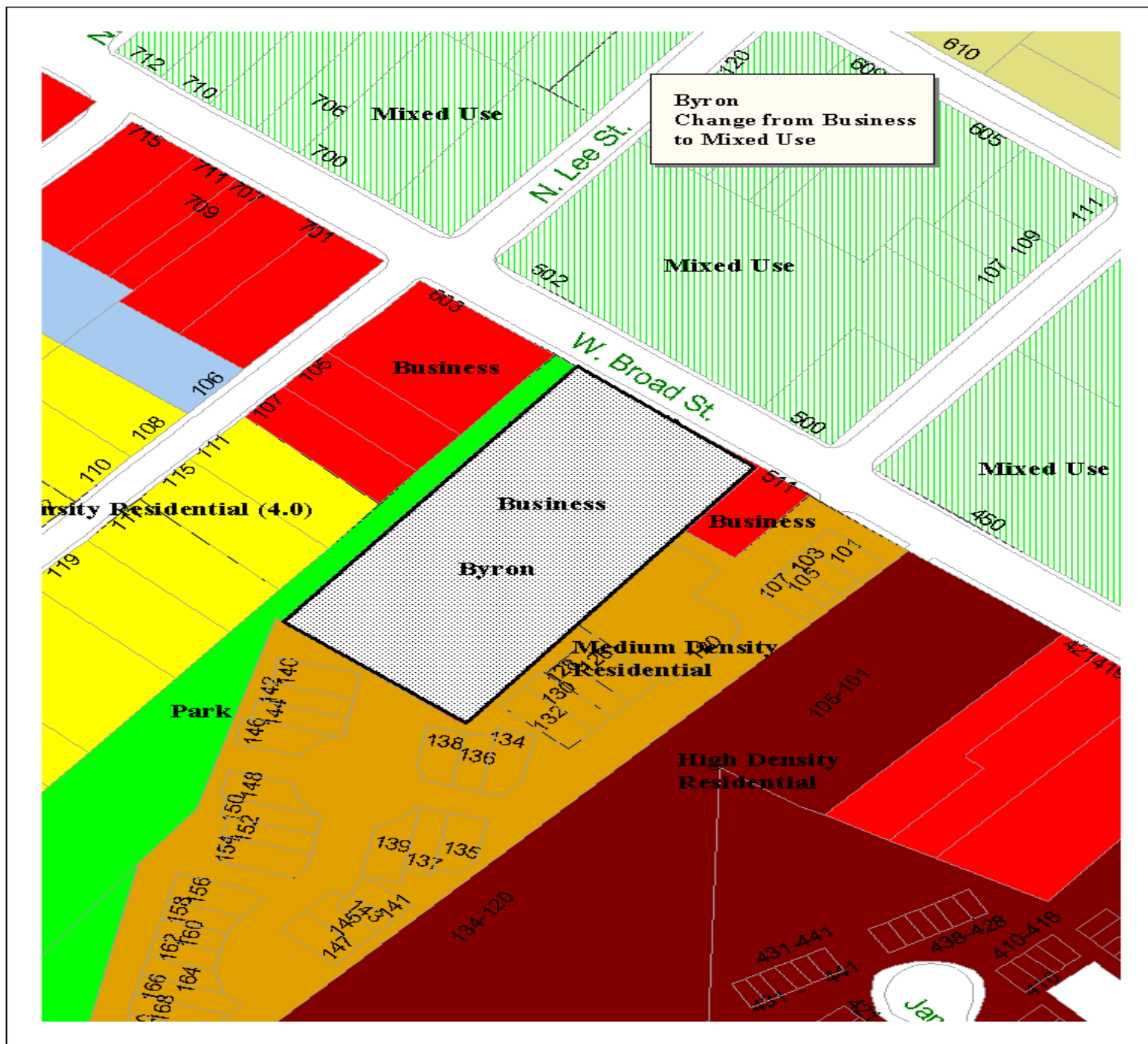


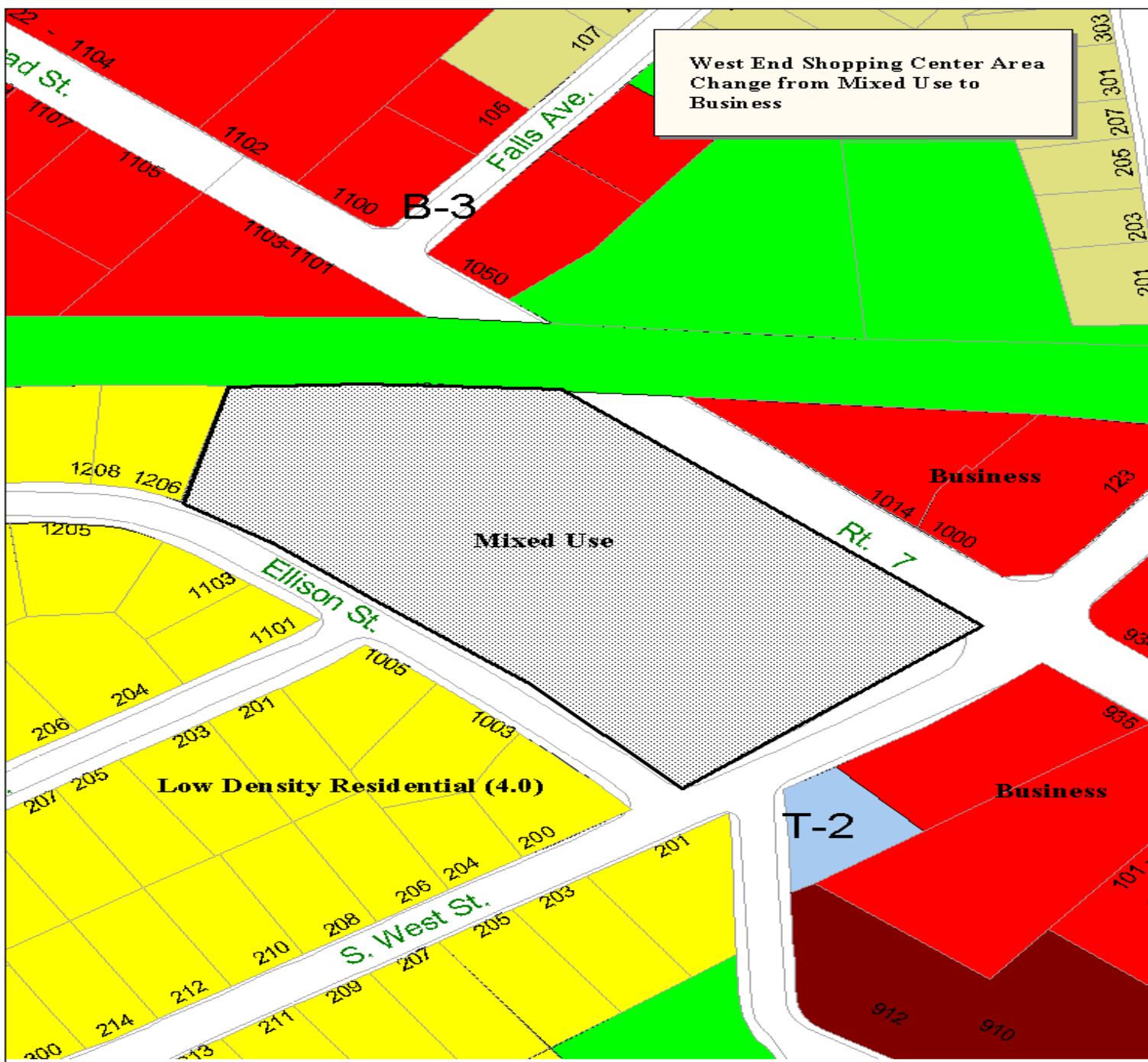


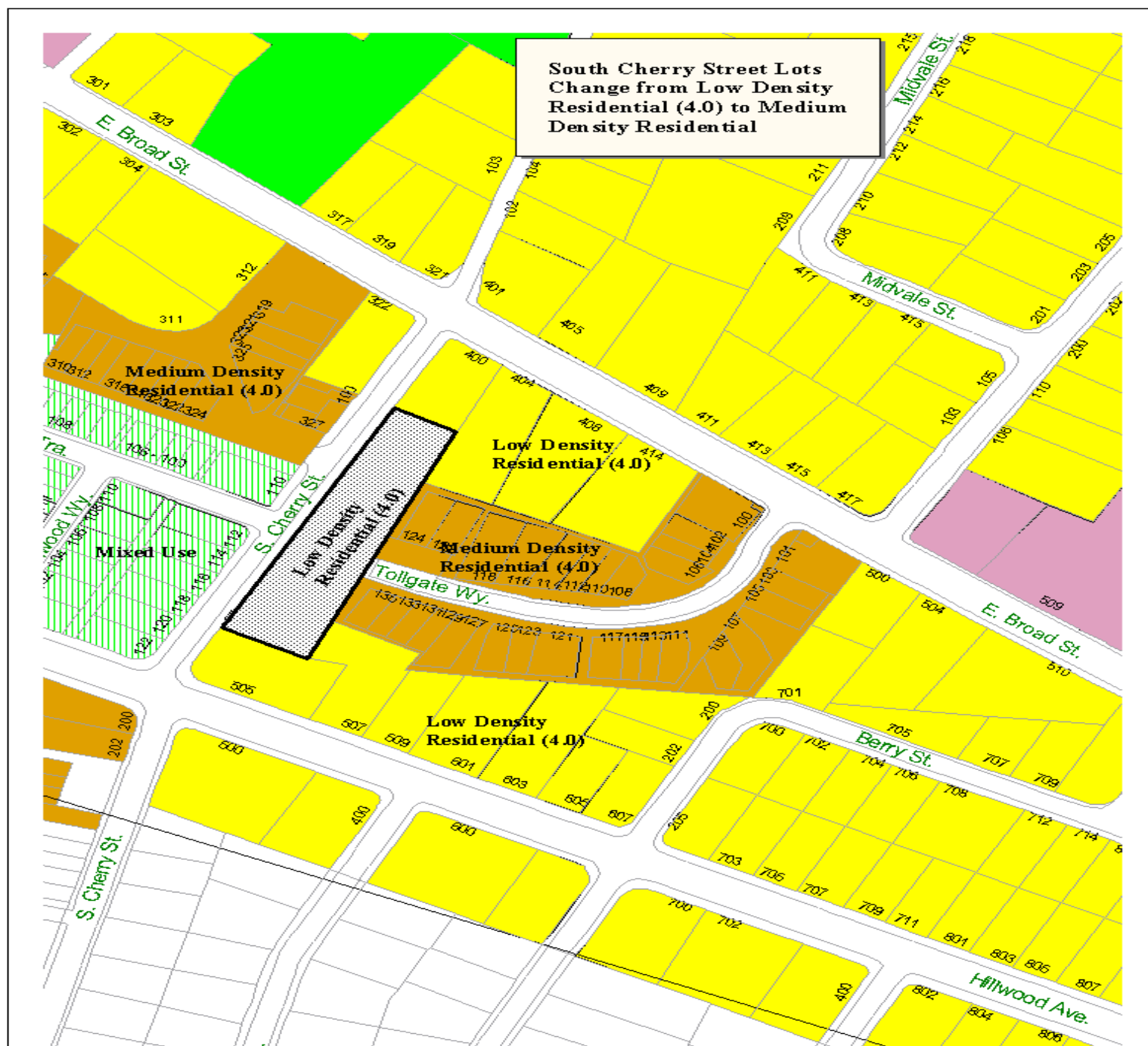




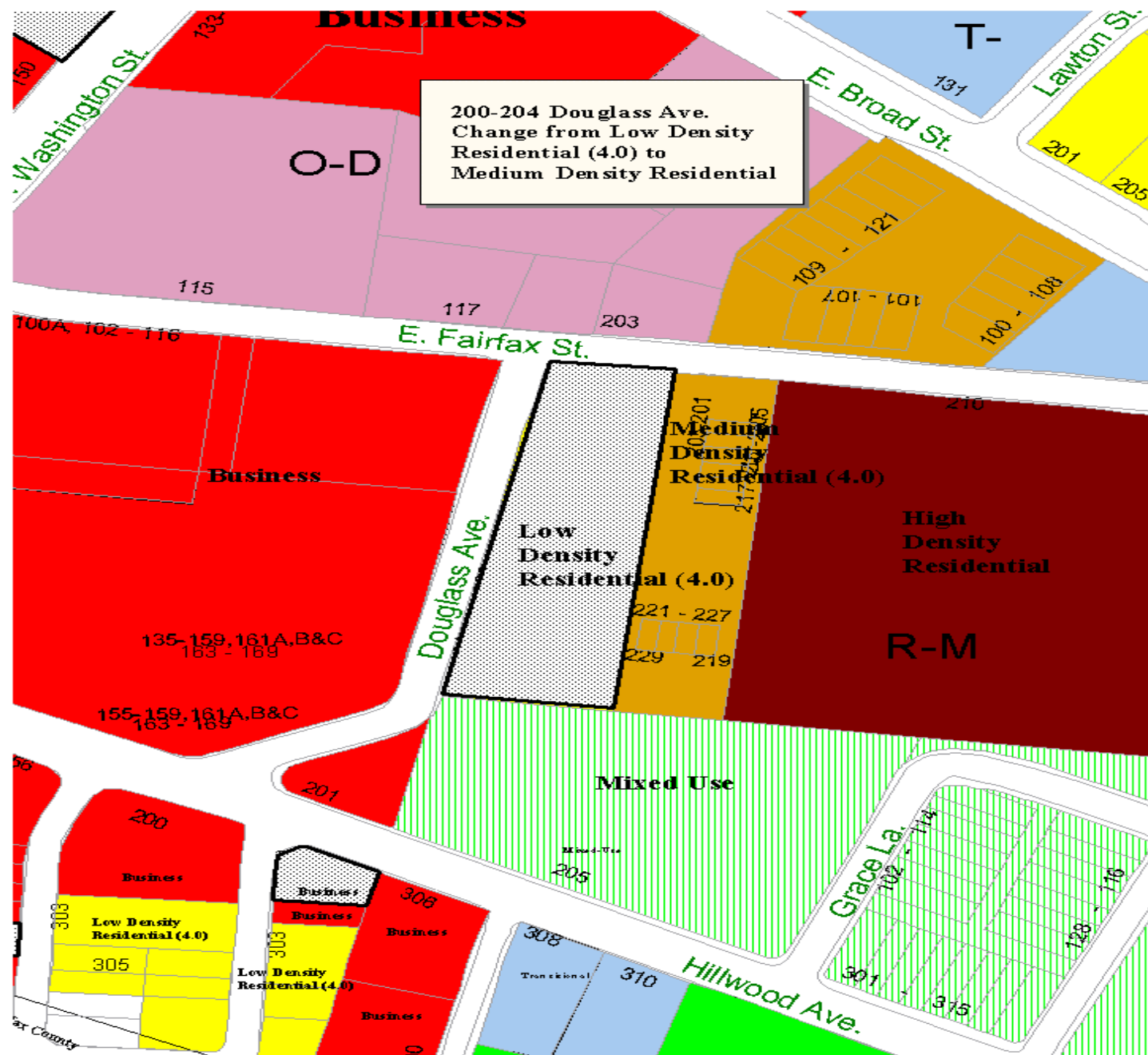


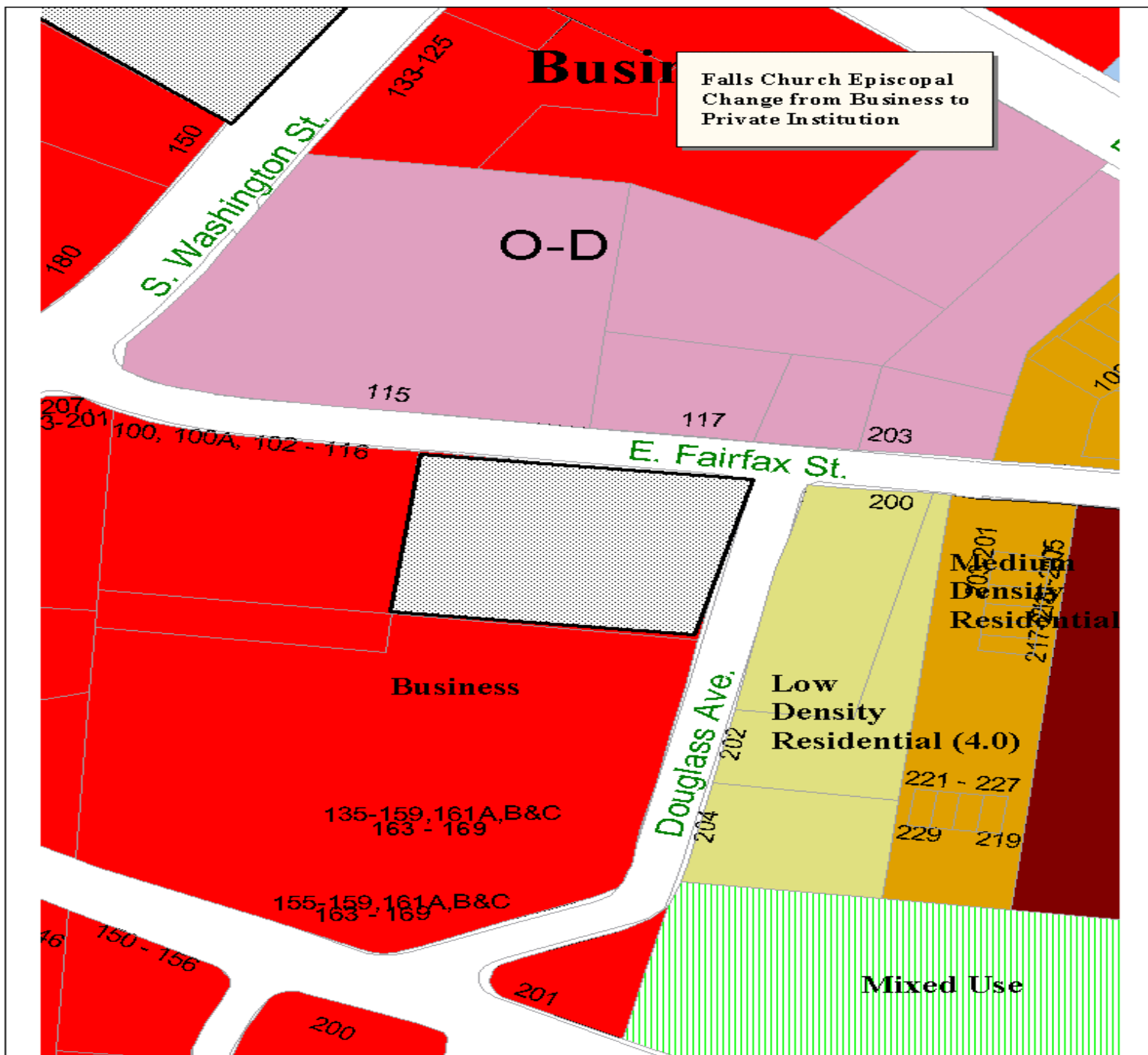


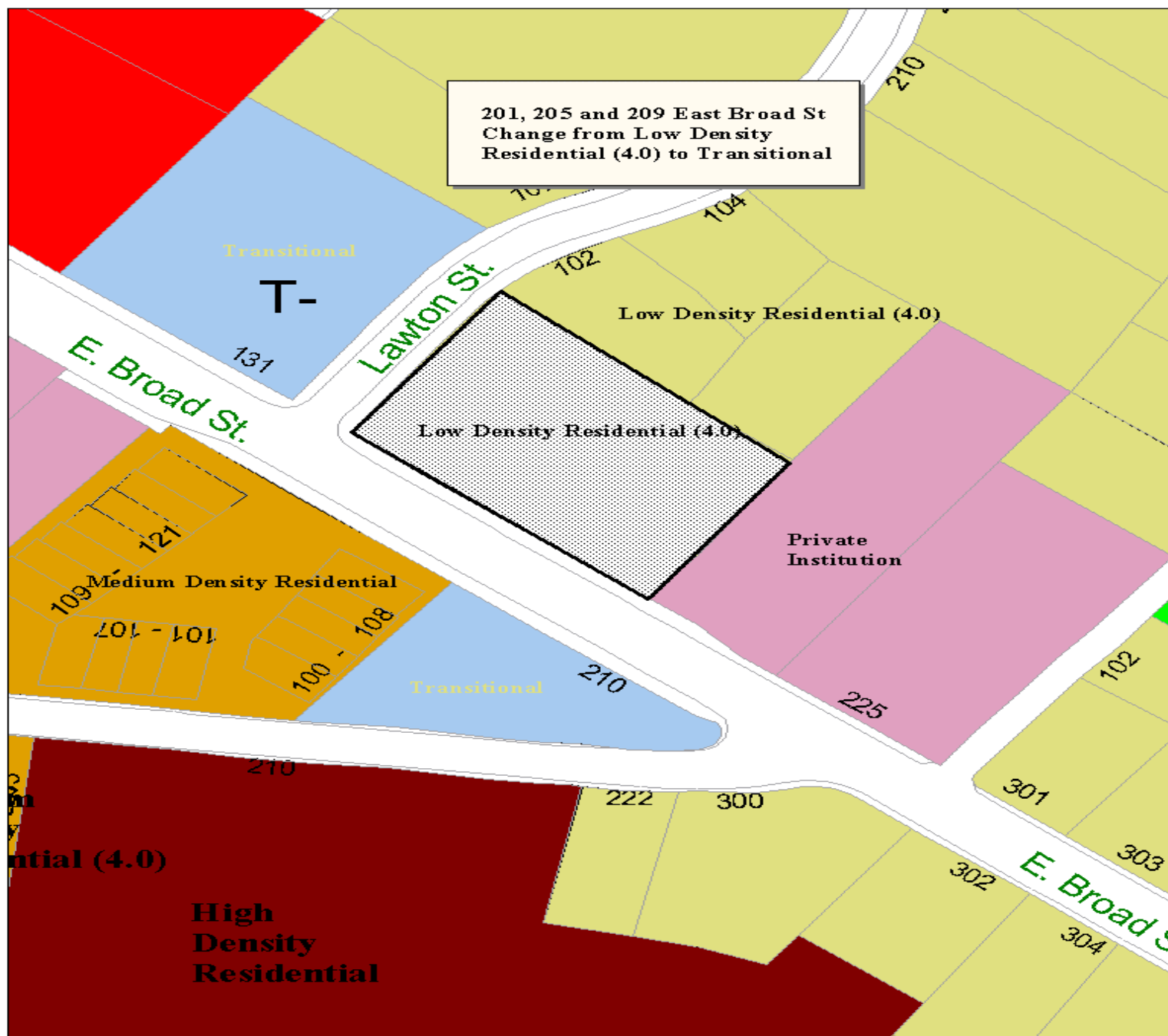


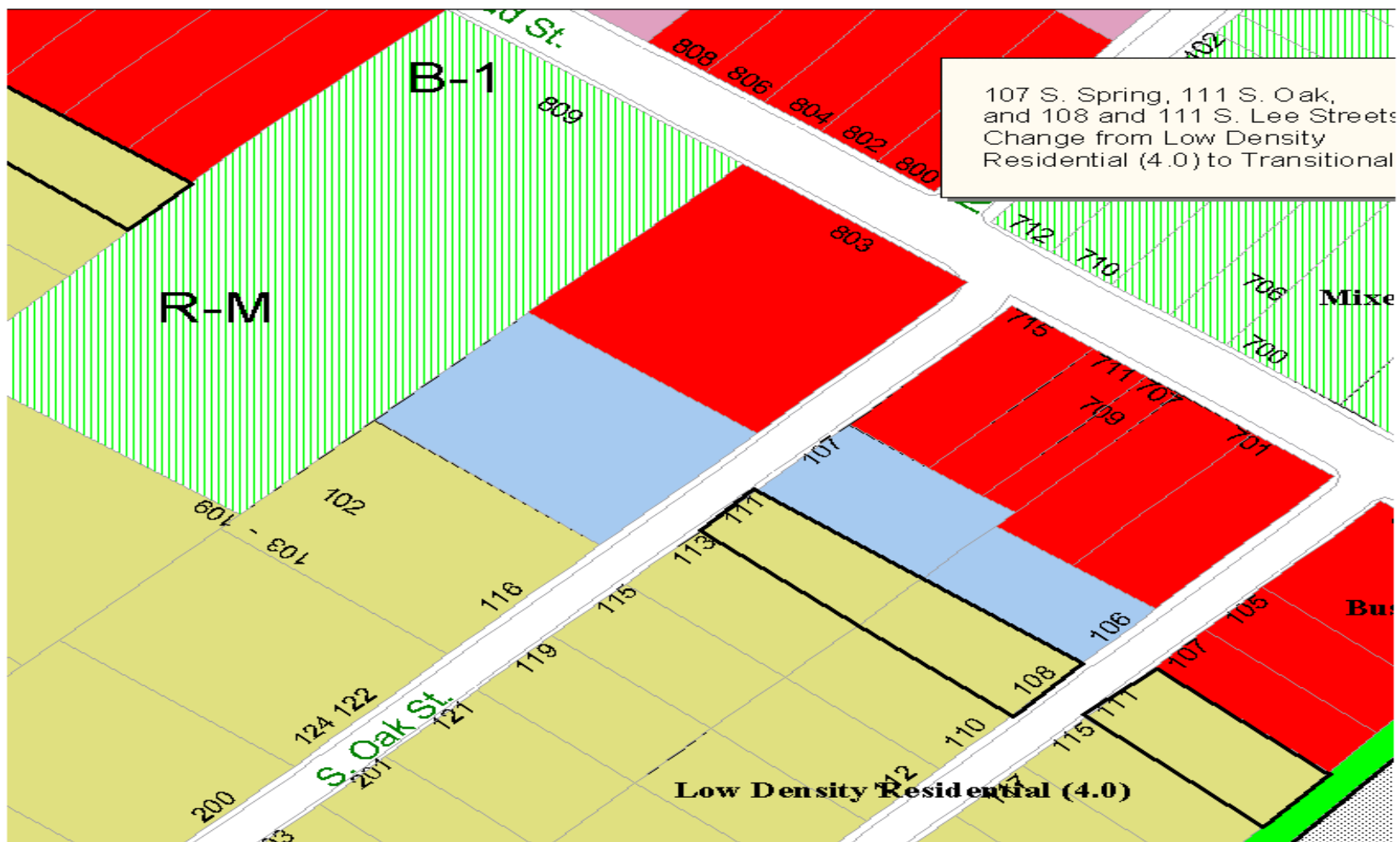


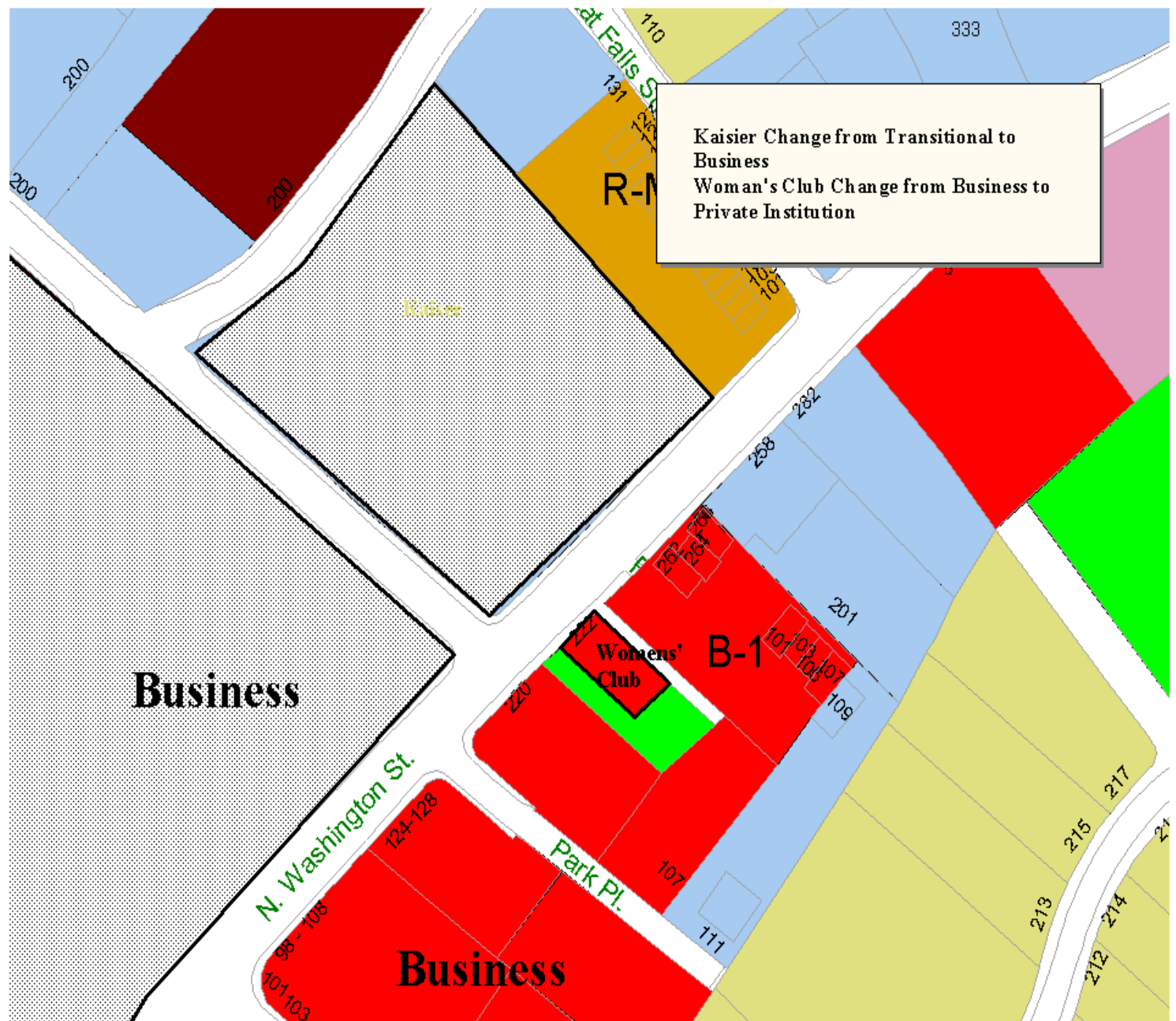


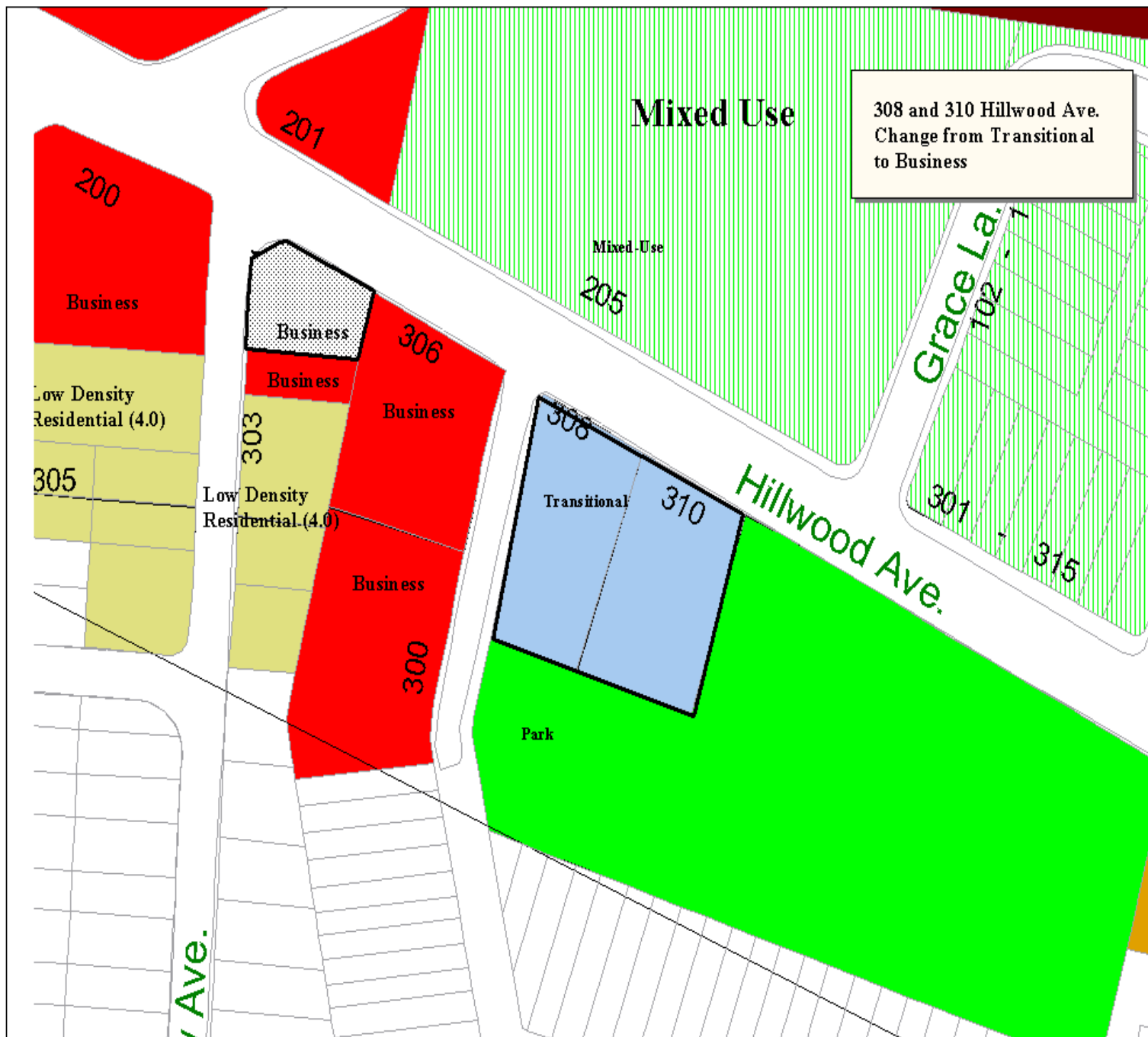














Planning Commission and Staff Proposed Revisions



- ★ **Remove the “MUR”** symbol from the Future Land Use Map and instead show it on the Zoning Map.
- ★ Remove “MUR” symbol altogether from 2 quadrants of City Center, West End Shopping Center area, and 400 and 500 blocks of W. Broad St.
- ★ **Primary City right-of-way** (paper streets) off of Cherry Street; running through W. George Mason, W. Greenway, W. Cameron, and W. Westmoreland Streets; Cedar Street; and Rothsay Street shown as parkland.



Corrections to 1997 Map

- ★ Designation of several parcels should be corrected on the new Future Land Use Map. They were mistakenly coded on the 1997 Plan map.
 - **919 and 921 Park Avenue** (to be corrected from **Private Institution** to **Low Density Residential (4.0)**)
 - **107 South Lee Street** (to be corrected from **Low Density Residential (4.0)** to **Business**.)





Natural Resources and the Environment--Summary

- ★ This chapter provides a description of the City's **environmental features, environmental protection mechanisms**, and public and privately sponsored **programs** aimed at preserving the environment.
- ★ Contains a variety of **recommendations** on how to **preserve the City's environmental features** now and in the future **both locally and regionally**.





Chapter Summary

★ Some of the primary goals and strategies in this chapter relate to:

-Minimizing the impacts of existing and new development and redevelopment on **vegetation, water quality and stormwater quantity**; and **conserving open space.**

-Building a stronger database of environmental features in the City's Geographic Information System (**GIS**)



Proposed Revisions

- ★ Primary revisions to Plan text are related to **new water quality initiatives** within City, including a discussion of the revised **Chesapeake Bay Preservation Overlay District (CBPO)** and the City's **National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES)** program.
- ★ New information is also included on the various **volunteer efforts** in the City related to Natural Resources.



Proposed Revisions

- ★ Goals 2 and 3 contain new strategies related to:
 - Increasing vegetated buffers** along streams;
 - Daylighting** portions of piped streams on public lands;
 - Limiting impervious** surface;
 - Inhibiting pollutants** during the development process;
 - Recommending improvements to City's stormwater system** to improve water quality.





Revisions Continued



-Designing **water quality improvement/ stormwater demo projects** for public land.



-Providing **technical assistance** to property owners to implement stormwater improvements on their properties; and



-Requiring **strong maintenance program** for best management practices that are implemented.



Revisions Continued

- ★ Goal 4 includes new strategies about **vegetative preservation and replacement** by:
 - Developing an **Urban Forestry Strategic Plan**; -Increasing **vegetation on rooftops and in parking areas**;
 - Encouraging citizens to **nominate trees** for the City's **specimen tree list**;
 - Educating** citizens about **invasive species** and encouraging the **planting of native species**; AND
 - Encouraging **tree protection and replacement** as part of the development process and encourage **site layout and design techniques to protect significant trees, streams, and other natural features**.



Revisions Continued

★ *Goal 7 includes two new strategies:*

-Promote **green building** and **low impact development** within the City.

-Improve **energy efficiency** and **reduce emissions** through changes in the City's **transportation fleet**.



Parks, Open Space, and Recreation--Summary

- ★ Provides a description of the City's **existing park and open space** facilities and **recreational** programs.
- ★ Describes need to **preserve** all **existing park and open spaces** and the need to **acquire additional space** as opportunities arise and in an **equitable** fashion.





Proposed Revisions

- ★ Describes the City's recent **park master planning** process to strategically plan for the most efficient utilization of its limited open space. Strategy 2-D promotes completion and implementation of the **park master plans**.
- ★ Discusses need to provide **linkage** between the City's parks, pedestrian and bicycle trails, greenways, and other City activity centers.
- ★ Strategy 1-D promotes the concept of using **technology** to better **publicize the City's recreational activities**



Proposed Revisions

★ **Parkland acquisition table from 1997 Plan deleted** from draft. New table will be added as result of work of Open Space Acquisition Committee.

★ Language about **acquisition tools and criteria** will be added at that time and need to discuss whether sites should be identified in text or on Future Land use Map.



Transportation--Summary

- ★ Describes City's **existing transportation and parking** system; relationship between **population growth, land use planning, employment patterns and transportation**; and connection to the **regional transportation system**.
- ★ Offers recommendations for the **parking supply, calming traffic, transportation demand management techniques**, and **improving linkages** for all modes of transportation within the City.



Summary Continued

- ★ Describes the need to:
 - **Encourage non-automotive forms of transportation within the City;**
 - **Enhance pedestrian and cyclist linkages throughout the City;and**
 - **Calm traffic in residential neighborhoods.**





Proposed Revisions

- ★ **Describes GEORGE bus system** and the need to support this service in the future.
- ★ **Describes Neighborhood Traffic Calming** program.



Proposed Revisions

- ★ New Goal 2 contains several new strategies related to:
 - **Ensuring safety of traveling public in general through mitigation of vehicular traffic hazards and improving pedestrian and cyclist safety throughout the City.**
- ★ Strategy 3-A contains an action to create a **citywide parking plan.**
- ★ Strategy 3-D relates to **mitigating the effects of traffic on residential neighborhoods that results from new development.**



Revisions Continued

- ★ Strategy 4-E has been added to encourage **housing to match needs of people who work in the City**, thereby acknowledging the link between **affordable housing** and **traffic management**.
- ★ Goal 6 promotes continued **support** of the **GEORGE** bus service, the addition of attractive and unique **bus shelters** throughout the City; and **continued funding for WMATA** for metrorail and metrobus.



Community Facilities, Public Utilities, and Government Services--Summary

- ★ Focuses on an inventory of and future projection for the City's facilities and services including **schools, the library, police and fire, public works and utilities, and solid waste management.**
- ★ Recognizes that **greater demands** will be placed on City's facilities and services **during next 10 years** due to increased population, employment, and commercial customer base and raises need to ensure that the **increased demands can be met** by the City.



Proposed Revisions

- ★ Revisions to the text of this chapter are generally **updates to existing conditions** of various public services.
- ★ Some new focus has been placed on **security** as part of the nation's Homeland Security procedures.



Proposed Revisions

- ★ Goal 6 describes need to **strengthen relationship between school system and community**, including an increase in **continuing education and recreational opportunities** for city residents and businesses.
- ★ Goal 8 outlines need to **ensure adequate funding for police and fire** services and to continue to participate in **emergency planning**.



Revisions Continued

- ★ Goal 10- new strategies relate to need to:
 - Initiate and **complete** public utility **CIP projects**;
 - Protect infrastructure** security; and
 - Potential for **adding new City infrastructure services** such as telecommunications.

- ★ New goal 12 describes need to ensure that **public facilities and utilities** do not detract from the **aesthetics** of the City.





Chapter 9 – Historic Preservation

- ★ Highlights City's **rich history** and need to **protect heritage**, particularly in the face of **development pressures**.
- ★ Describes **regulations** that currently **protect historic structures** and proposes **revisions** to regulations that will **protect a greater number of structures**. New Historic and Cultural Conservation District (HCCD Ordinance) text will be added upon ordinance approval.



Proposed Revisions

- ★ The only significant revisions to the text of this chapter will relate to a description of the **new regulations within the HCCD Ordinance once those are adopted.**
- ★ **HARB requesting that date of historic recognition be changed from pre-1910 to pre-1930.** This has not yet been incorporated pending City **Council guidance.**
- ★ **Planning Commission** recommended that results of **Cultural Resources Task Force Report** be incorporated- this was never finalized, but subcommittee is working on incorporating what is appropriate.



Proposed Revisions

- ★ Goal 1 contains several new strategies:
 - Support **nominations for State and National Register** historic **certification**;
 - Consider requiring **archaeological resources** to be **reviewed** during future development of sensitive properties;
 - Implement recommendations** of the 1996 *Architectural Survey and Assessment of the City of Falls Church, VA*; and
 - Create a **comprehensive resource guide** to all of City's historic resources.





Revisions

- ★ Strategies 1-B and 1-D of the 1997 Plan have been removed as **City not currently considering the creation of historic districts or acquiring Certified Local Government status.**





Housing--Summary

- ★ Primary focus is **lack of housing** in the City that is **affordable** to persons with low and moderate income levels.
- ★ Describes **inventory** of **existing housing units** and need to **preserve** this stock.
- ★ Discusses **demand for larger homes** that is contributing to the **construction of additions** and the **tearing down and construction of new homes** on existing lots.



Proposed Text Revisions

- ★ Revisions relate primarily to the addition of information about **recent affordable housing initiatives and programs**:
 - **2000 Affordable Housing Policy**
 - **2001 Affordable Dwelling Unit Ordinance**
 - **2002** adoption of the **special exception vehicle** that has provided for negotiated affordable dwelling units in new development projects.



Proposed revisions to Goals and Strategies

- ★ Goal 2 -two new strategies related to creation of **new rental apartments in the City and creation of affordable dwelling** units or acceptance of funds **within mixed-use projects.**
- ★ Goal 3- new strategies related to:
 - Assistance of **low and moderate income homeowners;**
 - Creation of **12.5% of new units as affordable;**
 - City **cooperation with regional organizations** on long-range plans **to increase the affordable housing stock** in Northern Virginia.



Revisions Continued

- ★ Strategy 2-C from 1997 Comprehensive Plan to encourage the development of **smaller townhouse units in the R-TH District** has been **removed**. There is **no vacant land in the R-TH District**, therefore this is not currently the correct vehicle for trying to create smaller, more affordable units. Could change if zoning tool is revised.
- ★ Concern mentioned about City possibly removing **3 acre minimum for townhouse** construction. This has not been proposed, although the Douglass Avenue and South Cherry St. Future Land Use Map proposals could be construed this way.